



**US Agency for International Development (USAID)  
USAID/Azerbaijan  
Initial Environmental Examination (IEE)**

**Program/Project/Activity Data**

Activity/Project Name:	Women Leading in Rural Health and Social Services Activity	
Assistance Objective:	DO 1: Azerbaijan's Society is More Capable and Engaged	
Program Area:		
Country(ies) and/or Operating Unit:	Azerbaijan	
Originating Office:	PPO	Date: June 9, 2023
<input type="checkbox"/> Original IEE/RCE	Original IEE LOP Start Date: o/a September 2023	
IEE/RCE History	DCN	LOP End Date
Original IEE/RCE	2023-AZB-001	o/a Sept 2023 – Sept 2026
Purpose of Amendment: N/A		
Contract/Award Number (if known):	N/A	
<b>Sector Type(s) from the ECD Advanced Search Tab (<a href="https://ecd.usaid.gov">https://ecd.usaid.gov</a>)</b>		
Major: Health	Minor: Health Education and Learning	
<b>Recommended Environmental Determination(s):</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Categorical Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Determination	
<input type="checkbox"/> Negative Determination <input type="checkbox"/> With Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Deferral	
<b>Additional Elements:</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Procurement	<input type="checkbox"/> Government to Government	
<input type="checkbox"/> Donor Co-Funded	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public International Organization (PIO) environmental and social policies and procedures applicable	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change Vulnerability Analysis (included) Climate Change Vulnerability Rating: Low		

## 1. Background and Project Description

### 1.1 Purpose and Scope of IEE

The purpose of this initial IEE is to define categories of environmental examination for the new three-year Women Leading in Rural Health and Social Services Activity. The primary goal of the Women Leading in Rural Health and Social Services Activity is to empower women to receive and provide high quality maternal and child health and social services in Azerbaijan. The activity will contribute to the CDCS DO 1: "Azerbaijan is a more capable and engaged partner" including IR 1.1 "Increased engagement between citizens and government to address critical needs" and sub-IR 1.1.2 "Ability of select government entities to engage citizens enhanced" through technical assistance to government bodies responsible for healthcare provision - the Agency for Compulsory Health Insurance (SAMHI), MoH and TABIB - which is expected to improve the quality and accessibility of the healthcare services.

## 1.2 Project Description

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- The goal of this activity is that women are positioned at the center of receiving and providing high-quality maternal and child health and social services in Azerbaijan. The Activity is structured with 2 objectives and 4 outcomes as follows:

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- **Objective 1: The quality, gender-responsiveness, and climate sensitivity of health and social services for rural women and children is improved**
  - Outcome 1.1: Scaled up and climate-sensitive universal-progressive home visiting platform for pregnant women and young children.
  - Outcome 1.2: Strengthened & scaled up integrated social services for child protection
  - Outcome 1.3: Improved gender-responsiveness of government social protection programs
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- **Objective 2: Young women and men are empowered and enabled to pursue a career in health and social services in rural Azerbaijan**
  - Outcome 2.1: Strengthened enabling environment for greater gender equity to pursue a career in home visiting and social services.

## 2. Baseline Environmental Information

### 2.1 Locations Affected and Environmental Context

- Azerbaijan's petrochemical resources provide a driving force for its economy and a major source of worldwide oil reserves, but the local population suffers from contamination of their environment as a result of oil production and transport. With a high level of unemployment, agriculture is the main income source for the rural population. It is important for Azerbaijan to develop non-oil sectors to drive future job growth and create a sustainable economy that improves the lives of all its citizens. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was liberating, but also left much of the population poorer than before and without services to which they were accustomed. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia resulted in approximately 900,000 people living as refugees and internally displaced persons. Azerbaijan encompasses an area about the size of Maine in the United States, it contains a remarkable diversity of ecosystems, climatic zones, and natural features including two mountain ranges with peaks more than 12,000 feet high, alpine meadows, semi-arid steppes, fertile lowland valleys, wetlands, rivers, and a coastline along the Caspian Sea. The geographical diversity has led to a concomitant diversity of animal and plant species. Azerbaijan is the last large refuge for a number of globally recognized rare and endangered species which are found only here and/or in neighboring areas. Due to the diversity of species and ecosystems in Azerbaijan and neighboring countries, internationally the Caucasus Ecoregion is considered a global hotspot for biodiversity.

### 2.2 Description of Applicable Environmental and Natural Resource Legal Requirements Policies, Laws, and Regulations

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- The National Programme for Ecologically Sustainable Social-Economic Development in Azerbaijan Republic (2002) and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP, 2006) are the main
- national level policy documents related to biodiversity conservation in Azerbaijan. The National
- Programme for Restoration and Extension of Forests was approved in 2002. This may be the most
- successful activity of all the programs and strategies of Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
- (MENR). Laws that relate to biodiversity conservation provide at least the minimal level of coverage that is necessary for effective nature conservation activities in Azerbaijan providing these laws are enforced.
- Unfortunately none of these laws, in practice, receive the enforcement or management needed to make

- them effective tools for biodiversity conservation in Azerbaijan.
- In Azerbaijan, in practice, EIAs are not required by law and are generally only submitted for projects backed by International finance institutions or by multinational corporations (MNCs). If an EIA is submitted, the EIA section of MENR's Expertise Department reviews the EIA.
- Between 1995 and 2003, Azerbaijan acceded to or ratified 14 major multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Since then, and in line with the recommendations made in the first Environmental Performance Review (EPR) in 2003, Azerbaijan has mainly focused on the implementation of MEA provisions. The country has made substantial progress in implementing some of the MEAs in its priority areas, but for others, implementation has barely started.
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- Azerbaijan further acceded to the Convention on the Trans-boundary Effects of Industrial Accidents in 2003, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in 2004, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (Marpol Convention) in 2004 and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety under the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2005. The National Assembly approves the international conventions and assigns the responsible governmental agency to fulfill relevant obligations. MENR is the responsible governmental agency to undertake the fulfillment of the obligations. MENR assigns focal points for each convention and its specialists are playing the key role in implementation of considered activities and preparation of related reports.
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- Azerbaijan's environmental legislation relevant to the Women Leading in Rural Health and Social Services Activity includes but not limited to the following laws:
  - 1. The Law on Environmental Protection is a framework law and covers all media (water, soil, air), waste management, protection of fauna, protected areas and ecological expertise. This law determines the order for the protection of atmospheric air, water objects, and soils, organization of waste collection and disposal, animal world protection, and operation of specially protected areas. State Ecological Expertise (SEE) under the Law on Environmental Protection, 1999, sets out the requirement for environmental assessment in Azerbaijan. Procedures for Environmental Assessment are stipulated therein. The objective of the SEE is to identify impacts on the environment caused by development activities/industrial units and examine the results of such impacts and prediction of possible ones, in accordance with the environmental requirements and qualitative parameters of environment (Article 50 of EP Law). Article 52 of the EP Law stipulates the Objectives and Responsibilities of the State Ecological Expertise. The activities, fields and sectors to which SEE would apply are specified in Article 54 (the units controlled by the SEE) of the EP Law as:

The state and local programs related to development and placement of productive capacities in governmental and economical institutions;

- The documentation of technical and economical substantiation, construction (reconstruction, enlargement, and renovation technology) and destruction of economical capacities, as well as assessment of the project influence on environment;
- Documentation concerning creation of new techniques, technologies, materials, and substances, as well as import of the same from abroad;
- Draft of scientific-methodical and normative-technical documentation concerning environmental protection;
- Certain ecological conditions caused by improper work of industry and extraordinary situations;

- Ecological conditions of the zones and individual (separate) natural objects and systems;
- Provisions of draft contracts stipulating use of natural resources, as specified by the relevant decrees of the concerned executive bodies

2. The Law on Environmental Safety was extensively amended in 2007 to introduce changes relating to noise and vibration in public spaces. Following these changes, presidential decrees in 2008 and 2009 set vibration and noise standards in residential and public buildings and granted authority to monitor and endorse compliance to MENR, the Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Ministry of Health.

3. In 1998 the Law on Consumption and Production Wastes was adopted, which was significantly revised in 2007. The revised version of the Law includes provisions related to the inventory of industrial wastes, hazardous wastes registration, and requirements for their trans-boundary movement.

4. The Law of 2002 on access to environmental information was significantly changed in 2010 in part for interpretation of conditions for the public access to this information, as well as criteria according to which the information is classified as public or restricted.

5. The basic law in respect of wastes in Azerbaijan is Law on Production and Domestic Waste (LoPDW). There are several subsidiary rules that provide the basis for implementation of the law. In accordance with LoPDW, waste is classified as Production (Industrial); or Domestic (household) waste. Waste is further classified as Hazardous waste; or Non-hazardous waste.

6. The Law on phyto-sanitary control defines the legal basis for tests, registration, use of pesticides and agrochemical substances and organization of agrochemical service in agriculture. This law defines the framework principles of regulations and rules on production, import and export, packing and labeling, storage and transportation, use, removal of expired and prohibited substances, clean-up and elimination of pesticides and agrochemical substances.

7. The water policy is mainly implemented through water legislation, particularly, through the Water Code of the country. The Water Code is a basic legislative act of the country, regulating the water sector. Based on this Code, several Laws, and a number of bylaws were adopted. Particularly, the Law on Water Supply and Wastewaters, Law on Amelioration and Irrigation, Law on Hydro meteorological Activities, Law on Entrails, Law on Municipal Water Economies, Law on Safety of Hydro-technical installations, etc.

7.1. Law on water economy of municipalities, 2001 - defines the legal basis for the relations between the municipalities and relative government executive bodies, entities and individuals regarding the use and protection of the water structures located within a territory of municipalities of the Azerbaijan Republic. The water economy of municipalities is the activities regarding the regulation, use and protection of the local significant underground and surface waters located on the municipal lands, as well the elimination of erosion.

7.2. Law on water supply and wastewater, 2000 - regulates relations concerning supply of the population, enterprises, institutions and organizations with water complying with state quality standards and discharge of effluent wastewater.

7.3. Currently, surface water quality standards are established following the Rules for Protection of Surface Waters against pollution (RPSW) of 1994 (adopted by Azerbaijan's State Committee for Environmental Protection and Ministry of Health) and the Sanitary Rules and Norms for Protection of Coastal Sea Waters against pollution in water use areas (HR No 4631-88). The Hygienic Norms and Rules contain the sanitary and hygienic norms for:

- Water bodies used for drinking, irrigation and recreational purposes and for the needs of the food industry;
- Norms and rules for protection of water bodies relative to various economic activities;
- Wastewater discharges to water bodies and elsewhere to the environment;

- Avoidance of pollution from infrastructure or equipment and from the operation of facilities.

It also identifies a list of 341 chemical substances for which sanitary maximum allowable concentrations are established, including ammonia, fluorine, sulfates, (heavy) metals and organic micro-pollutants.

The 1992 Law on Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare and the 1999 Law on Environmental Safety stipulate that the quality of the untreated water used for drinking and recreational purposes must comply with hygienic standards. In accordance with the 2000 Law on Water Supply and Wastewater, drinking water sources should be protected through pollution prevention measures in order to meet the requirements of sanitary and environmental legislation.

### 2.3 Environmental Capacity Analysis

The number of the Government of Azerbaijan's (GOAJ) programs and activities that promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resources is quite limited. They consider this topic to be easily funded by international donors, but such efforts are just beginning. There are two related national programs, the National Programme for Ecologically Sustainable Social-Economic Development in Azerbaijan Republic and the National Programme for Restoration and Extension of Forests. In total, 33 international programs were implemented by MENR including eight that at least indirectly concerned the protection of biodiversity. The ones most relevant to biodiversity conservation include a project for Creation of Samur- Yalama and Shahdag National Parks, the construction of fish nurseries for sturgeons for wild release, announcement of Hirkan forest as a potential World Natural Heritage Site, preparation of an Action Plan for Nature Conservation, and analyzing the Ecosystem of Caspian Sea. World Bank/GEF/Government of Japan joined with the GOAJ on a 4 year \$17 million project to primarily help develop a management plan, provide infrastructure for tourism, train guards, etc. for the newly created Shahdag National Park, but actual results on the ground are as yet limited. Shamar-Yalama National Park, has received support from UNEP, but again results are presently limited. The Hirkan Forest is awaiting being officially declared a World Heritage Site, and progress on the Azerbaijan's Action Plan for Nature Conservation has been slow.

According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Status of Municipalities, the Municipalities in Azerbaijan has right to allocate land for waste disposal and their utilization, issue local environmental programs including preservation of the ecological balance existing locally, the greenhouse and the improvement of the municipal territory, the collection, transportation, disposal and recycling of municipal waste, the protection of water, air, land pollution, implementation of environmental measures and other local significance measures as well as realization of anti-erosion control, land fertility, agrochemical, ameliorative, phytosanitary and other measures at the land plots. Also, municipalities have right for usage and protection of water objects and use of water objects for discharge of sewage.

### 2.4 Climate Change Vulnerability Analysis

Climate patterns in Azerbaijan are influenced by three important physical features: the Caspian Sea, whose shoreline forms a natural boundary to the east; the Greater Caucasus mountain range in the north; and the extensive lowlands in the center of the country. Nine out of 11 of the world's climate zones are found within the country's boundaries, including semi-desert, dry lowlands, foothills and mountain tundra, with temperatures varying depending on proximity to sea, regional landscape dynamics, and arctic and temperate wind dynamics. Average annual temperatures range between 14–15°C in the lowlands and coastal regions and 4–5°C in the mountain regions. Annual precipitation levels range from 1,600–1,800 mm in the southern regions to 200–350 mm in the eastern Absheron Peninsula. Based on the climate change analysis the following climate change impacts and associated risks over the life of the activity are expected (source: <https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/climate-change-risk-profileazerbaijan>):

- Increase in temperatures: It is projected that temperature increase of 1.4–2.8°C by 2050 and 3–6°C by 2100 will take place across the country.



- Decrease in precipitation: Precipitation is expected to decrease by 5 percent by 2040 in Nakhchivan and Lesser Caucasus areas, with no significant changes in other areas. Projections for rainfall are less certain overall and vary greatly by model and scenario.
- Increased cases of flood: Greater frequency and magnitude of flood events due to increased intensity of single rainfall events.
- Caspian Sea level rise: It is expected that the Caspian Sea will rise by 1.5–2 meters by 2050.

Example risks to Women Leading in Rural Health and Social Services Activity due to climate impacts:

The Climate Stressors and Climate risks in agriculture sector, water resources, tourism, health such as rising temperatures, especially during the summer, increased number of heat waves, increased frequency and magnitude of flooding, reduced water resources, including freshwater, reduced snow, the growing number of mud- and landslides in mountain areas; and the rising level of the Caspian Sea will potentially lead to risks of:

- Increased incidence of heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and skin rash
- Aggravation of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, especially among the elderly
- Increased range of vector-borne diseases, especially in the highlands
- Loss of life and livelihoods from flood and landslide disasters; relocation from disaster-prone areas
- Extensive damage to water infrastructure from flash floods and land- and mudslides
- Potential reduced crop yields

There is a Low climate risk that climate change will significantly impact achievement of development outcomes relative to other stressors and development challenges under this activity. The Mission will ensure that potential climate-related risks in targeted areas will be screened, and properly addressed, in more detail at the activity work plan development phase.

### 3. Environmental Impacts and Recommended Mitigation Measures

#### Objective 1: The quality, gender-responsiveness, and climate sensitivity of health and social services for rural women and children is improved

Sub-activities	Potential Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Recommended Threshold Determinations
Outcome 1.1 : Scaled up and climate-sensitive universal-progressive home visiting platform for pregnant women and young children.	None anticipated	N/A	Categorical Exclusion
Outcome 1.2 Strengthened & scaled up integrated social services for child protection	None anticipated	N/A	Categorical Exclusion
Outcome 1.3 Improved gender-responsiveness of government social protection programs	None anticipated	N/A	Categorical Exclusion

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○ **Objective 2: Young women and men are empowered and enabled to pursue a career in health and social services in rural Azerbaijan**

Sub-activities	Potential Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Recommended Threshold Determination
Outcome 2.1: Strengthened enabling environment for greater gender equity to pursue a career in home visiting and social services.	None anticipated	N/A	Categorical Exclusion

#### 4. Conclusions of the Environmental Review

##### 4.1 Recommended Environmental Determinations:

##### ***Categorical Exclusions:***

A categorical exclusion is recommended for the following sub-activities under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2):

- Sub-activity 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1 under §216.2(c)(2)(i) Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.);
- Sub-activity 1.3, 2.1 under §216.2(c)(2) (iii) Analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings;
- Sub-activity 1.1 under §216.2(c)(2)(viii) Programs involving nutrition, health care or population and family planning services except to the extent designed to include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, water supply systems, waste water treatment, etc.);

##### 4.2 USAID Monitoring and Reporting

- 4.2.1 The AOR/COR, with the support of the MEO, is responsible for monitoring compliance of activities by means of desktop reviews and site visits.
- 4.2.2 The AOR/COR is responsible for confirming that the IP includes environmental compliance requirements and monitoring results as part of their routine project reporting to USAID.
- 4.2.3 The AOR/COR is responsible for monitoring, to the extent practicable, that the IP complies with applicable host country environmental requirements.
- 4.2.4 If at any time the project is found to be out of compliance with the IEE, the AOR/COR or MEO shall immediately notify the BEO.
- 4.2.5 A summary report of Mission's compliance relative to this IEE shall be sent to the BEO on an annual basis, normally in connection with preparation of the Mission's annual environmental compliance report required under ADS 203.3.8.5 and 204.3.3.
- 4.2.6 The BEO or his/her designated representative may conduct site visits or request additional information for compliance monitoring purposes to ensure compliance with this IEE, as necessary.

##### 4.3 Implementing Partner (IP) Environmental Compliance Monitoring and Reporting

- 4.3.1 The IP is required to comply with applicable host country environmental requirements.
- 4.3.2 If an individual activity is found to pose significant adverse environmental effects that have not been identified and addressed in the approved environmental review documents, new environmental review documents shall be developed to include environmental safeguards for such effects.
- 4.3.3 IPs shall report on environmental compliance requirements and monitoring results as part of their routine project reporting to USAID.

## 5. Mandatory Inclusion of Requirements in Solicitations, Awards, Budgets and Workplans

- 5.1 Appropriate environmental compliance language, including limitations defined in Section 6, shall be incorporated into solicitations and awards for this activity and projects budgets shall provide for adequate funding and human resources to comply with requirements of this IEE.
- 5.2 Solicitations shall include Statements of Work with tasks for meeting environmental compliance requirements and appropriate evaluation criteria.
- 5.3 Environmental mitigation and monitoring requirements, when available, shall also be included in solicitations and awards.
- 5.4 The IP shall incorporate conditions set forth in this IEE into their annual work plans.
- 5.5 The IP shall ensure annual work plans do not prescribe activities that are defined as limitations, as defined in Section 6.

## 6. Limitations of the IEE: This IEE does not cover activities (and therefore should changes in scope implicate any of the issues/activities listed below, a BEO-approved amendment shall be required), that:

### 6.1 Normally have a significant effect on the environment under §216.2(d)(1), including:

- Programs of river basin development;
- Irrigation or water management projects, including dams and impoundments;
- Agricultural land leveling;
- Drainage projects;
- Large scale agricultural mechanization;
- New lands development;
- Resettlement projects;
- Penetration road building or road improvement projects;
- Powerplants;
- Industrial plants;
- Potable water and sewerage projects other than those that are small scale.

### 6.2 Support project preparation, project feasibility studies, engineering design for activities listed in §216.2(d)(1);

### 6.3 Affect endangered and threatened species or their critical habitats per §216.5, FAA 118, FAA 119;

### 6.4 Provide support to extractive industries (e.g., mining and quarrying);

### 6.5 Promote timber harvesting per FAA 117 and 118;

### 6.6 Lead to new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or renovation work;

### 6.7 Support agro-processing or industrial enterprises;

### 6.8 Provide support for regulatory permitting;

### 6.9 Lead to privatization of industrial facilities or infrastructure with heavily polluted property;

### 6.10 Research, testing, or use of genetically engineered organisms except in accordance with ADS 211; or

### 6.11 Assist the procurement (including payment in kind, donations, guarantees of credit) or use (including handling, transport, fuel for transport, storage, mixing, loading, application, clean-up of spray equipment, and disposal) of pesticides or activities involving procurement, transport, use, storage, or disposal of toxic materials per §216.2(e) and §216.3(b). Pesticides (cover all insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, etc. covered under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act); and

## 7. Revisions

- 7.1 Under §216.3(a)(9), if new information becomes available that indicates that activities covered by the IEE might be considered major and their effect significant, or if additional activities are proposed that might be considered major and their adverse effect significant, this environmental threshold decision will be reviewed and, if necessary, revised by the Mission with concurrence by the BEO.



It is the responsibility of the USAID COR/AOR to keep the MEO and BEO informed of any new information or changes in the activity that might require revision of this IEE.

**8. Environmental Threshold Decision Clearances:****Approval:**

Angelina Allen-Mpyisi

Digitally signed by Angelina Allen-Mpyisi  
Date: 2023.06.20 06:24:34 -07'00'

Angelina Allen-Mpyisi, A/Mission Director

Date

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**Concurrence:**

POOJAN BHASKER  
TRIPATHI (affiliate)

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Poojan Tripathi, Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO)  
USAID Europe and Eurasia Bureau

Date

**Distribution:**

- Activity File
- AOR/COR
- MEO
- BEO
- ECD

▪ **Annex A: Climate Risk Screening and Management Tool**

1: Components or Sub-activities	2: Time-frame and Geography	3: Climate Risks*	4: Climate Risk Rating*	5: How Climate Risks are Addressed in the Activity*	6: Accepted Climate Risks*
<b>Objective 1: The quality, gender-responsiveness, and climate sensitivity of health and social services for rural women and children is improved</b>					
Outcome 1.1 : Scaled up and climate-sensitive universal-progressive home visiting platform for pregnant women and young children	3 years / Nationwide	No risks identified	Low	The implementer, UNICEF, will track any information related to climate risk, if applicable.	n/a
Outcome 1.2 Strengthened & scaled up integrated social services for child protection	3 years / Nationwide	No risks identified	Low	The implementer, UNICEF, will track any information related to climate risk, if applicable.	n/a
Outcome 1.3 Improved gender-responsiveness of government social protection programs	3 years / Nationwide	No risks identified	Low	The implementer, UNICEF, will track any information related to climate risk, if applicable.	n/a
<b>Objective 2: Young women and men are empowered and enabled to pursue a career in health and social services in rural Azerbaijan</b>					
Outcome 2.1: Strengthened enabling environment for greater gender equity to pursue a career in home visiting and social services.	3 years / Nationwide	No risks identified	Low	The implementer, UNICEF, will track any information related to climate risk, if applicable.	n/a

\* means a required element, according to the Mandatory Reference